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A-ONE #0703   01/14/05

  ~ Tackling Cyber Bullies ~ People Are Talking!   ~ eBay Raises Fees!

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       ~ Apple Unveils Mini Mac ~ Feds Pursue Spammers!  ~ Apple After Teenager
       ~ Family-Friendly Games? ~ 'Titan' Will Zap Worms ~ Texas Sues Spammers
       ~                        ~ Happy Nude Year Worm! ~

                       -* Atari BBSes, Still Connected *-
                     -* New Yahoo Software Can Search Drives *-
                    -*  FTC Claims Victory Against X-Rated Spam!  *-




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->From the Editor's Keyboard              "Saying it like it is!"
  """""""""""""""""""""""""""""
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Oh, what a week! It's been one of those weeks that you can't wait to get
over, and forget! Snow, record high temperatures, freezing rain, more snow!
You gotta love New England! And work! What a roller coaster there too!
Sometimes I wish that I didn't have to behave like a responsible adult.

Okay, I got that out of my system; the weekend is almost upon us. I've
started going through some of our archives for stories of yesteryear, and
then I got a few e-mails talking about an article being done by one of our
new subscribers. Since it's always nice to hear from our readers, I waited
for the article before continuing my history research. Wouldn't you know,
the article that I received - and included in this issue - references a part
of Atari history, before the internet took a stronghold among computer
users. What am I talking about? Remember bulletin boards? You know, those
bastions of message boards, chat areas, downloads, and text games. The
article that we have for you this week brought back lots of memories of the
BBS that I used to run - Toad Hall EBBS - for almost 13 years! What
enjoyment and knowledge running that board provided. We had callers - and
I'm talking about long-distance dial-up caller - from all over the world. I
remember first running Toad Hall on a 520ST, a 20-meg hard drive, and a 1200
baud modem. Over the years, the ST was upgraded to 4 megs, 500 megs of
drive space, and a 9600 baud modem. Various versions of MichTron and
RatSoft BBS software included all kinds of user-created add-ons. What a
blast! Like many things, technology (or lack of it with regard to things
Atari), the BBS faded away, Long distance phone rates and the internet were
the major factors for bulletin boards going the way of the dinosaurs. But,
as Greg Goodwin tells us, the BBS hasn't been wiped out yet. Technology, a
little tweaking, and even the internet has helped to get some systems back
online. If you want to re-live this part of your Atari experience, you
re going to want to read Greg's article...at least twice!

Until next time...

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                    /|\ How to Connect to the Atari BBS's
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> Hi Doc,
> If you can make me a step by step manual, I give it a go!
> Cheers,
> Sijmen. / Mr Atari

That is the least I can do for someone who made a movie player for the
Atari 8-bit and the MyIde interface.  To matter the fact, this message is
being sent out as a general invitation to a few that may or may not have
known about the growing number of Atari BBS's that are being set up over
telnet.  (Or didn't know there was a movie player for the 800xl or ide
interface I suppose as well.)  :)

The next big part of this will talk about what a BBS is and how to connect.
If you have a good grasp on all that, and just want to know the actual BBS
locations and what to find on them, skip past on this next part till you
find the big Atari symbol made in ASCII art and the title heading "Here are
the addresses and what to look for once there."

/|\   WHAT IS A BBS?

I always feel I should just put this blurb in when talking about the BBS's.
I mean, though many Atari users are fully aware of what they are, I am
happy to say that we have such a new crowd, many brought in by the
internet, that they don't know.  In short, we have new blood and that is a
very good thing.

A BBS, plain and simple, is some hobbyist setting up their own computer to
answer incoming calls from other hobby computers.  The visiting person
leaves messages on this computer for other visitors, plays games while
visiting, sends and receives files, and all that.

Oh, and BBS stands for "Bulletin Board System."  Think of a cork board
where notes are thumb tacked to it throughout the day and that is a good
visual idea of what this is.

/|\   WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THAT AND THE INTERNET?

Probably not much.  So let's look at what an Atari BBS has to offer.

First off, the internet!  Since all the BBS's are connected through the
internet, they are actually better in a way than their "good ole days"
counterparts where the BBS was either local or a long distance charge was
involved.  At one time you might have found five Atari BBS's in a local
dialing area and hundreds of other BBS's.  Today, that feeling is there
once again, thanks to the internet as hundreds of BBS's are springing up
like weeds, and at least five BBS's (so far) are within dialing range once
more, so to speak.  ;)

The Atari BBS's offer a segue of the internet that the Atari 8-bit
computers can easily understand and use.  They are usually 40 column, and
feature ATASCII characters, which was the Atari special type of ASCII
character set.  Because of this, having a real Atari or Atari emulator to
visit the Atari BBS's is nice to see the creative ATASCII art that has been
created.  And even more fun is the ATASCII "Break Type" movies where people
have taken this art and made short cartoons.

In truth, when you are on Atari BBS's you will be and see things that few
will ever see.  That road less traveled will make all the difference.  ;)

It is important to briefly note that through BBS's, both Atari and

non-Atari, you can read E-mail, check newsgroups (like the Atari 8 and ST
newsgroups), and other activities are possible.  And there are BBS's and
services out there that have a web browser online that you can call with
the Atari computer and surf the web with.  The browser is all text and
might take a bit of getting used to; however, it is interesting to search
Google using an Atari 400.  :D

HOW DO I GET THERE?

At the end of this brief introduction, I will feature the locations on how
to get to the various Atari BBS's.  But the ways to get there would
include...

1) finding a local BBS that has both a dial in number and the means to
"telnet" out.  In this way, you are borrowing the internet connection of
another computer that you will connect the Atari computer to via phone.
Once you connect to that other computer, you would select the telnet
option, and enter in the address like "telnet://bfbbs.no-ip.com" getting
you to where you need to go.  In this case, that other BBS acts as a
bridge.  If you want to try this option and don't mind a long distance
call, let me suggest the following numbers...

Collin County   972-562-8064
     Log in, from main menu hit A for Arcade, 8 for other places
     And then 7 or 8 chooses already listed Atari BBS's.

Family-Net BBs 972-496-0650
     Log in, and at the main prompt type "Telnet" and then at the next
     prompt type the address, for example "bfbbs.no-ip.com"

     The best mostly accurate list for looking up such a service close to
     you, if there is one (and they can be rare) can best be found at
     www.bbsmates.com.

Trick in these cases is to call using bobterm in ASCII.  Once you have
telnetted to the other BBS and connected, you can then switch your term
program to ATASCII and enjoy the Atari BBS as it was meant to be enjoyed.
When you exit the Atari BBS and return to the host BBS you called to get
that Atari BBS, make sure to switch back to ASCII.

2) Use a more modern Computer (or non-Atari)

This is perhaps the easiest way to start and try this out.  Alan Sharkis is
a well known Atari user who has logged on for quite some time with this
method.  First, for about any modern computer go to your internet browser
and enter in the address line something like "Telnet://bfbbs.no-ip.com" and
the browser will open (hopefully) the right program to take you to that BBS
location.  It will be understandable, though not with the ATASCII character
set.

There are solutions for seeing ATASCII characters on the PC.  One is found
at http://www.atarimax.com called the Atari Terminal Simulator (ATS) which
is freely downloadable.  This will only view Atari 40 column ATASCII BBS's,
but does a fine job of it.  There is one question...

"Dr. Clu,

I quickly see that for me to access BF BBS this computer seems to need to
emulate a terminal program!  Might you suggest one?  Using Windows XP, the
connection is not the best; was able to connect once out of 5 or 6

attempts.  Of the 4 options to use the BBS, which one should be chosen? Be
well.

 Sparky!"

Well Sparky, I have to admit, I have been able to use the ATS on Win 98 and
2000 very well, but have run into trouble with it under XP.  I'm sure this
can be worked out, and will tinker with at work when my boss isn't looking.
:D  But in the meantime, try logging on with Hyperterm.  Check it out, have
fun writing to Atari users, and we'll work out the rest in time.  For now,
we would love and even need your company so come on over!  ;)

3) APE interface PC gateway.

Speaking of www.atarimax.com, Stever Tucker made this wonderful ability in
the windows version of APE (the program and cable that lets you make a PC
an Atari's bit...er..slave.  :D)  there is a great ability to tap into the
PC's internet.  Bring up the APE program on the PC, Bobterm on the Atari,
and Bobterm will notice the internet out there.  Now you can enter in a
telnet address and it will take you right to it.  Nice and basically cheap setup
, and great way to take advantage of the internet setup on your PC.

4) Serial to ethernet interfaces.  (UDS-10/ MSS-1, etc)

The buzz word in Atari BBS'ing these days is a fabulous device that allows
your Atari to connect to it via the serial port.  The device has a serial
port on one end, and a lan port on the other.  This device will add your
Atari to your home internet network.

"Internet what?  Hold on pilgrim... What in tarnation are you talking
about?"

Ok, at home, maybe you have cable modem or DSL.  Maybe you have one of
those little fangled routers that let you share this service with more than
one computer.  That is what I'm talking about.  From that router, you have
cables going to your PC, and a few other PC's, and now you can have a cable
that goes to your Atari computer as well.

These serial to ethernet interfaces emulate a modem.  You say "AT" in the
term program, the interface, like a modem, will say "OK".  I have the
UDS-10, and I was able to set the interface up using an Atari computer and
nothing else.  The interface has enough smarts to give you a menu to set it
up.  Setting it up might take some work, but I, or Marius or anyone else
with a UDS-10/100 or MSS-1 would be willing to help if you ask nicely.

Once this interface is setup, you hit a macro on Bobterm, and quicker than
dialing in, instantly you are on.  And all that macro has to say is
"ATDT213.10.217.144/8888"  Just like you were dialing a phone number, but
in this case it is the Atari BBS's IP address over the internet.  Kewl eh?

```
     ._,¯,_.
     ||| |||       "HERE ARE THE ADDRESSES...
     ||| |||
     ;|| ||:       ... AND WHAT TO LOOK FOR ONCE THERE..."
   ./ /| |\ \.
   |./ :_: \.|
```

Current Atari BBS List 01/12/2005

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Atari Inside            telnet://213.10.217.144/8888
Boot Factory            telnet://bfbbs.no-ip.com
Closer To Home          telnet://cth.dtdns.net
Mousenet BBS            telnet://atari-bbs.kicks-ass.net
Inside the 8-bit        telnet://216.78.138.17/8888 or 8889 (two lines)


CHAT ONLY  (This BBS is not run on a Atari or Atari emulation but
            makes a simple chat room to reach with an Atari computer)
Www.atarinews.org       telnet://216.240.173.22
    (ANSI terminal like Ice-T suggested)
Tuesday chat at  8 pm CST
Thursday chat at 8 pm CST
Sunday  chat at 10 am CST (Also known as the Europe chat)
```

What you will find when you arrive at these BBS's are usually a nice
ATASCII drawing if you have a term program that supports that. If not,
they usually have a creative non-ATASCII one.

Being Pro! BBS's (the type of BBS program they are running) most of them
have a "Q" command which will give you a quick scan of the messages other
have written. It will say you are on message 1 of 50... Skip to like 45 by
hitting either a "J" for jump to number, or "G" for goto number. Just be
careful that the G is not for "Goodbye". :) Read the last ten messages,
maybe read the rest later or not. But see what has been written there.

Then you can hit sometime like R for reply, or P for Post a new message,
and that is how you jump in and have fun. Leave your message, and
hopefully in turn others will write back.

Cartoons at the main menu is where those ATASCII "break type" cartoons are.
Usually quite entertaining. Just remember, these are not regular graphics,
but key characters placed around each other to look like a picture or
graphics. A fun art form in it's own self.

Games section at the main menu usually has a selection of simple games like
Kingdom, online Chess, and so on.

SO ONE BIG QUESTION... WHY?!?

And the question comes up again.. Why?
These places make a great place to leave messages to other Atari users. But
then you can do that in E-mail.

These places offer a great place for discussions... But then there are
newsgroups for that.

These offer a place to share files, but the you can do that on the internet
too.

But you know what is really fun? Turning off the rest of the world for a
bit, and turning on a Atari computer, and only that. And with whatever
means listed above, or others not listed, calling BBS's, checking mail and
the newsgroups, and then stopping off in that bit of Atari with the ATASCII
graphics and just being off in another rarely seen world. A world that
belongs to you a few others.

And then you realize that your Atari computer is connected to another Atari
computer on the other side. A fun thought.

And maybe you'll turn on the rest of the world... Or maybe a day will go by
when you don't have to if you don't want to. Just you and your Atari
computer taking care of business. Always fun to dream.

(I know you'll questions, to matter the fact, I'm hoping on it. ;) Write
me at greg.goodwin (A T) rdfig (D O T) net.)

(Oh yeh, ST Users, I know these are mainly 8-bit BBS's, but please do
stretch your ST's legs and come by and visit. And there is talk on a ST
BBS making a return, so stay tuned...)

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                         PEOPLE ARE TALKING
                        compiled by Joe Mirando
                          joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Mother Nature is kicking us around here in
the north east again. I know, I know, there are lots of places that have
it a lot worse than a few temperature changes and a couple of inches of
snow.

Hell, between California with the heavy rains and mudslides and the Reno,
Nevada area dealing with more snow than they've seen in years, this side
of the country doesn't have much to complain about at all. I probably
wouldn't even think twice about the temperature and weather changes if
it weren't for the fact that my neck bones creak when the weather
changes now. I'm not kidding... they really do. Who said getting older
wasn't fun? <g>

I've been thinking a little bit recently about the choices that we
make... both privately and as a group. In both cases, it seems that we
play 'the ostrich' more and more... sticking our heads (both singly and
collectively) in the sand and hoping that things will just get better
all on their own.

Oh sure, we know that it's not going to happen that way and that every
second we delay just makes it harder to do whatever it is that we
already know that we have to do, but there's evidently something in us
that keeps saying, "put it off for a little bit longer and see if it
helps", even though we know through experience that it's not going to
happen.

I was going to use the recent Presidential election to make my point, but
I think I'll wait a little bit longer and see if things get better all
on their own. To quote Brittany Spears, oops, I did it again. <grin>

Well, let's get to the news, hints, tips and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
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Derek Mark Edding asks about a boot manager for the Falcon:

"I'm trying to resuscitate my Atari Falcon after about five years of neglect. I've put it into a Wizztronics Rack case, and set it up with HDDriver (paid for) and a 20 GB IDE drive.

After restoring its previous boot setup, I've found that some of the boot programs aren't playing well together. There are several of them, all managed by SuperBoot Version 8.1.

Because I used SuperBoot, not all of these boot progs are expected to work well together.

My questions are,
1. What do these boot programs do?
2. Do I still need these today? Are there better equivalent programs?

```
Program Name      Startup Text
============      ============
FPATCH2           FPATCH 2 Installed     (Falcon Patch 2?)
I-DRIVIN          DEVICE DRIVER SUPPORT 94-12-30 (Harun Scheutzow)
I-SCC             Fast Routines for SCC M2/S2 (Harun Scheutzow)
NVDI              V 3.02
FFSEL             Freedom V 1.15
MMACEL34          Mouse Accelerator 3 V 4.0
FPPRNT            Print Patch 1.0  (Frank Palowski)
DRVIN             (Same as I-DRIVIN above)
SCC               (Same as I-SCC above)
STIKTSR           STIK TSR  (TCP/IP)
```

There are more of them, but I know what the others are for."

Greg Goodwin tells Derek:

">FPATCH2   FPATCH 2 Installed   (Falcon Patch 2?)

Patches serial port (I think). I believe the STing package replaces it.

>> I-DRIVIN   DEVICE DRIVER SUPPORT 94-12-30 (Harun Scheutzow)

Not sure -- probably part of FPATCH

>> I-SCC   Fast Routines for SCC M2/S2 (Harun Scheutzow)

Not sure -- probably part of FPATCH

>> NVDI   V 3.02

Faster VDI and print driver. Very important. Ended at V 5.x.

>> FFSEL   Freedom V 1.15

File selector. Very nice, but not always stable.

>> MMACEL34   Mouse Accelerator 3 V 4.0

Mouse accelerator. I recommend Silkmouse instead

```
>> FPPRNT           Print Patch 1.0  (Frank Palowski)
```

Not sure.

```
>> DRVIN            (Same as I-DRIVIN above)
```

Yep.

```
>> SCC              (Same as I-SCC above)
```

Yep.

```
>> STIKTSR          STIK TSR  (TCP/IP)
```

Replaced by STIK 2 and STing. STing seems to have a larger following,
from what I can tell, but STIK 2 works well.

Generally, boot order matters more than the boot program. Post your
boot order and I'll take a look at it."

Adam K⁻obukowski asks about what he calls a weird disk problem:

"From time to time few first sectors of my HDD get zeroed, for no known
reason.

This includes boot record, partition table and part of fat of first
partition.

It happened for me at least 3 times during last 3 years. It happened on
two (or maybe three or four - my memory is a bit fuzzy here) different
disks, so this does not seem to be a disk issue.

There are no symptoms, I cannot reproduce it. Falcy was working fine, i
turn it off, after some time I turn it on again and tada: beginning of
disk is gone to data-heaven (wherever that is).

Fortunately I do not keep valuable information on my C partition, and I
do backups of it often, so recovery is just a matter of minutes.

Additionally: it happened both when my falcy was plain (no accelerator)
and after I fitted CT60 (no busspeeder yet).

Also: I do not use any software that is known to faulty and could harm my
data.

If anybody does have any reasonable explanation of this, please rise
your hand and step forward."

Ronald Hall tells Adam:

"I remember the first Falcons had a problem with overwriting the
beginning of a partition when the partition before it became full. This
doesn't sound like what's happening to you though - do you have the first
TOS 4.x version? Just a thought."

Ekkehard Flessa adds:

"I've seen this problem also, and at that time I was running TOS 4.04 only, but with HUSHI as hard disk driver. But nowadays I'm using MagiC or MiNT and HDDRIVER, and moreover have way bigger hard disks, and thus haven't seen that problem for years."

John Garone asks about Atari-to-PC MIDI:

"I seem to be having a timing problem playing Atari MIDI files on a peecee. The problem is that a 3 minute song flashes by in 3 seconds on the peecee. I tried converting to both Normal and Simple, with and without a conductor track, and with and without Auto, using the program they were created with (files were created with Midisoft Studio). Midisoft creates an SNG file but it's not compatible with other SNG files or I would have tried to convert the SNG to MID with another MIDI program to see if it helped. Any thoughts?"

John later posts:

"For those interested, the timing problem is solved.

The Midisoft sequencer clock must be set to MIDI before exporting the SNG file to midi type 1 or 2. That setting on the Atari requires a midi signal to the computer for the song to play so I don't use that setting. I use the internal clock set to 140 bpm for that song so, I assume that the Atari Mega ST4 8 mhz cpu supplies the timing signal, therefore, a 233 mhz peecee would play it about 30 times faster (30x8=240) and a 3 minute song (180 seconds) divided by 30 = 6 seconds which is close to the time it took to play it before!!! fandangled contraptions !!!"

Well folks, that's it for this week. I know its short, but messages in the NewsGroup weren't as abundant as they have been recently. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Parents Want Family-Friendly!
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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Parents Search for Family-Friendly Games

As president of Activision Publishing, Kathy Vrabeck helps promote and
develop games like "Doom 3," "Tony Hawk's Underground 2" and "Call of
Duty."

But she might think twice before buying those top-sellers for her
7-year-old son. In a gaming world where violence reigns, parents like
Vrabeck are searching for family-friendly titles bearing a rating of "E" -
for everyone.

"As a parent myself, trying to figure out what your kids want is always
troublesome," Vrabeck said.

With kid-friendly movie tie-ins like "Shrek 2," "Shark Tale," and "Lemony
Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events," Vrabeck and her Activision team
have created several titles for children young and old.

Though most games target an older audience, companies like Activision Inc.,
Electronic Arts Inc. and Nintendo Co. have alternatives that are
universally accepted as family-friendly. And LeapFrog Enterprises Inc. has
ventured into the gaming industry with a handheld edu-tainment system,
Leapster.

Steve Martin, of New York City, was initially hesitant about buying his
daughter, Morgan, a game system at all. He said he wasn't sure whether
there were enough games he was willing to let into his house.

"I am looking for things where we can play together, like golf and tennis
where we aren't shooting and killing people," Martin said. "There's more
stuff for boys, teenagers and adults than for kids."

"Dance Dance Revolution," a game in which players dance on a large game pad
to keep up with directional cues given on-screen, sealed the deal. Morgan
is getting a PlayStation 2 system for her 8th birthday this month, and she
had added games to her Hanukkah list in anticipation.

Since 1994, the Entertainment Software Rating Board, a self-regulatory body
set up by the gaming industry, has rated more than 10,000 video games. Use
of the ESRB seal and rating is voluntary, though virtually all games do so.

According to the ESRB, 57 percent of all games rated in 2003 were "E,"
compared with a combined 42 percent for "T" and "M" games - teen and
mature. Few of the games use "EC" for early childhood or "AO" for adults
only.

"There are definitely a lot of titles that are great for parents," said
David Tokheim, senior director of marketing intelligence for GamerMetrics
and IGN.com, a leader in trend-tracking for the game industry.

Nonetheless, teen and mature games are bigger sellers.

Data analyzed by GamerMetrics and IGN.com show that 46 percent of all games
sold in 2004 were rated "E," while "T" and "M" sales accounted for 54
percent of overall sales.

Although the ESRB considers "E-rated" titles suitable for children ages 6 and older, the games may still contain "minimal violence, some comic mischief and/or mild language." "T-rated" titles are considered suitable for ages 13 and older, while "M-rated" games are targeted at 17 and up.

According to Tokheim's team, which analyzes consumer trends, purchase plans and Web site input, the most popular "E-rated" games include Sony Computer Entertainment's "Gran Turismo 4," and Electronic Arts' "Need For Speed Underground 2" top the list.

Sports titles include "NBA Live 2005." Animated character games like Nintendo's "Mario Power Tennis" are also popular.

Nintendo characters like Mario, Luigi, Donkey Kong and the gang have been popping up on Nintendo game systems since the late 1980s and remain prominent franchises for Nintendo's GameCube, GameBoy Advance and the new Nintendo DS.

Sixty-five percent of GameCube games are "E-rated," said Nintendo of America spokeswoman Beth Llewelyn.

Nintendo's new games include "Donkey Konga," where players match beats and rhythms on the screen with a corresponding set of Konga drum controls.

While the majority of games target 18- to 25-year-olds, companies like Activision are trying to educate parents about the rating system and to encourage retailers to enforce their own measures in restricting the sale of certain titles to children under 18, Activision's Vrabeck said.

Outside pressure on the industry is mounting. Last month, Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich proposed legislation aimed at making it a misdemeanor to distribute, sell or rent violent or sexually explicit video games to children younger than 18.

Games aimed at the younger set are also smart business, Tokheim said.

"The game industry should continue to milk proven franchises," Tokheim said. "With new consoles come new opportunities to create brand new titles. Many of the most successful games ever sold on PS2, Xbox or GC are 'E-rated.'"

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Apple Unveils Mini Mac, IPod Shuffle

Apple Computer Inc. chief executive Steve Jobs introduced a cut-rate computer the size of a paperback on Tuesday and a tiny iPod that starts at $99, but holds fewer songs than its hard drive-based music players.

The new products seek to make inroads against the traditionally more affordable PC market and against lower-cost competitors to Apple's wildly popular iPod.

The Mini Mac computers, smaller than even some standalone external computer drives, go on sale Jan. 22. They lack a monitor, mouse and keyboard. The 40-gigabyte Mini Mac will cost $499, an 80-gigabyte model $599.

The computer comes with Apple's latest operating system, Mac OS X Panther, as well as the newest version of its iLife suite of digital media software programs, also unveiled Tuesday.

"People who are thinking of switching will have no more excuses," Jobs said during a keynote speech at Macworld and Expo. "It's the newest and most affordable Mac ever."

The product for the first time puts Apple in the budget desktop PC arena, which so far has been largely confined to personal computers that rely on Microsoft Corp.'s Windows operating system.

Building upon the success in a rapidly growing niche that it already dominates, Apple also is rolling out two lower-priced versions of its iPod music players.

The iPod Shuffle, available immediately, is smaller than most packs of chewing gum and weighs less than an ounce.

Unlike the hard drive-based iPod Mini, it doesn't have a display. There's a scroll wheel for the controls so a user can either play the songs in order or have the device automatically shuffle stored songs in a random order.

Apple is selling two versions of the iPod Shuffle.

The smallest will have 512 megabytes of storage and cost $99. A one-gigabyte version, which holds 240 songs, will sell for $149. The lowest cost iPod is the mini, which costs $249 for four gigabytes - enough to store about 1,000 songs

"We want to bring even more people into the digital revolution," Jobs said.

The iPod has helped infuse new life into Apple. In the past year, the Cupertino-based company's stock has tripled on strong sales of the iPod, which is emerging as one of the 21st century's first cultural icons.

Analysts expect the new iPods will help Apple hold its lead in the MP3 market.

Because many rival flash-based players have just 256 megabytes of storage, Apple is "sticking to its cut-above position," said Susan Kevorkian, an industry analyst with IDC. "There are plenty of people who want an iPod but haven't been able to afford the $249 Mini, so offering these lower-priced players allows Apple to attract not just new users but those who already own an iPod but want an even smaller version."

With the Mac Mini, Jobs is setting out to expand Apple's 3 percent share of the U.S. computer market.

New Yahoo Software Searches Hard Drives

Internet giant Yahoo Inc. is offering to help consumers and office workers
sift through the digital mishmash stored on their computers with a free
software product to be introduced Tuesday.

The new product, developed as part of a licensing agreement with a startup
called X1 Technologies, follows through on a plan Yahoo announced last
month.

Sunnyvale-based Yahoo is counting on the software to help it catch up in
the race to do a better job of quickly finding the wealth of information
and entertainment increasingly stored on computer hard drives.

Two of Yahoo's biggest rivals, online search engine leader Google Inc. and
software giant Microsoft Corp., introduced their own free tools for
scouring the computer desktop late last year.

Several other smaller companies, including Pasadena-based X1, also are
offering products designed to make it as simple to find digital information
offline as it has become online.

Yahoo is touting its solution - which will run only on the Windows
operating systems - as the most comprehensive and nimble of the current
crop on the market. The company says its software will comb through more
than 200 different file types while providing users with more privacy
controls to prevent unauthorized access to sensitive information stored on
computers.

A test version of Yahoo's new software can be downloaded at
http://desktop.yahoo.com.

FTC Claims Victory Against X-Rated Spam

Claiming a victory against X-rated spam, the Federal Trade Commission said
Tuesday it had won an order to shut down illegal Internet advertising for
six companies accused of profiting from sexually explicit e-mail.

A federal judge in Las Vegas granted the commission's request for a
temporary restraining order against the companies, their executives and an
affiliate for allegedly violating federal laws regulating commercial
electronic mail, commonly known as spam.

The FTC sought an injunction halting the network's illegal e-mail ads. The
judge agreed Jan. 5 to a temporary ban. Pornographic spam is especially
nettlesome because it can be delivered to the electronic mailboxes of
children.

Frank Cremen, who represents the companies named in the complaint, said his
clients have "no quarrel" complying with the law, and that the spamming had
stopped before the FTC filed its complaint.

"They've tried to work with the FTC to work this out," Cremen said in a
telephone interview.

The case marked the first time the commission took action under a rule that

requires a label in the subject line of sexually explicit e-mails, to make it easier for parents and others to filter such messages. The law also holds others liable for operating Web sites that benefit from fraudulent pornographic spam.

"It's not just the people who push the buttons to send spam" who are liable, said Eileen Harrington, director of the FTC's marketing practices division.

The companies named in the FTC complaint operate about 20 Web sites advertised in the illegal e-mails, Harrington said.

The Nevada companies were Global Net Solutions Inc., Open Space Enterprises Inc., Southlake Group Inc. and WTFRC Inc., which does business as Reflected Networks Inc.

Also named in the complaint were Global Net Ventures Ltd., of London, and Wedlake Ltd., which the FTC said is based in Riga, Latvia.

Executives of those companies were named in the complaint along with an individual, Paul Rose. The FTC said Rose sent hundreds of thousands of illegal e-mails directing recipients to the sites operated by the companies named in the filing.

The Associated Press could not locate Rose or an attorney representing him.

The FTC said the e-mails did not include the required "SEXUALLY EXPLICIT" warning in the subject line, falsely promised free membership to the Web sites and gave recipients no way of stopping the unwanted e-mails.

Those requirements are part of the Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act of 2003, dubbed "Can Spam," and other federal trade laws. Spammers who violate the rules face possible imprisonment and criminal fines of up to $250,000 for individuals and $500,000 for an organization.

Tracking down violators can be difficult because spammers often hide their identities by using forged return addresses or by bouncing their e-mails through unprotected relay computers on the Internet.

Harrington said the agency located the companies and individuals through e-mails consumers sent the FTC last spring. The defendants, who she said operate as one entity, are barred by the court action from sending out spam but are permitted to operate the Web sites involved.

Feds Pursue Suspected Spammers

Federal authorities are quietly carrying out a series of raids against the nation's biggest suspected spam operators in their most aggressive actions yet.

Sometimes striking in the early morning, FBI agents and other law enforcement in recent weeks have pounced on ventures in Florida, Arizona, New Jersey and New York that allegedly used spam to defraud consumers and steal personal information. More actions are expected.

Computer equipment is being seized in hopes of unearthing evidence that

will flush out associates worldwide and lead to criminal charges, FBI agents say. The searches are being conducted under a year-old federal anti-spam law.

The actions are the latest wrinkle in the fight against spam, which has flourished despite high-profile legislation and lawsuits. Though the low-key raids won't make an immediate dent, they send a strong message. The top 200 spammers are responsible for 90% of spam e-mail that clogs Internet traffic and costs businesses and consumers more than $20 billion worldwide last year, anti-spam experts say.

Dozens of high-powered computers, allegedly used to pump out millions of spam e-mails a day, were confiscated from a marketing firm in Boca Raton, Fla., last month. The search, and at least three others, follows a Justice Department probe last summer, Operation Web Snare, in which 160 alleged cybercriminals were arrested.

"Law enforcement understands the significant economic impact of spam," says Dan Larkin, head of the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center. He says the investigations were assisted by tech companies, such as Microsoft and America Online, that supplied evidence.

Something dramatic needs to be done, anti-spam experts say, because spammers aren't dissuaded by laws and lawsuits.

The federal anti-spam law hasn't put a lid on spam. About 97% of unsolicited commercial e-mail violates the law, says anti-spam firm MX Logic.

"It really comes down to enforcement of the law," says Julian Haight, founder of SpamCop, an anti-spam organization."It doesn't eliminate the problem but gets the attention of the bad guys."

Major spammers are rarely arrested because they cover their tracks. Many use computers in places such as Costa Rica and China. A growing number rely on computer viruses and worms that turn consumer PCs into spam-emitting machines.

"If a spammer did everything right and didn't get sloppy, it could be almost impossible to identify them," says Kelly Wallace, who represents Internet service providers in lawsuits against spammers.

Texas Seeks Millions from Major 'Spam' Operation

One of the world's largest "spam" e-mail operations was served with a lawsuit on Thursday seeking several million dollars in damages for sending out misleading electronic messages over the Internet, the Texas attorney general said.

Greg Abbott said Texas filed a lawsuit in federal court in Austin seeking damages from Ryan Samuel Pitylak, a University of Texas student, and Mark Stephen Trotter of California. The two are suspected of controlling companies - PayPerAction L.L.C., Leadplex L.L.C. and Leadplex Inc. - that sent millions of spam messages pitching fraudulent services.

Watchdog group SpamHaus.org has ranked the pair as running one of the top five spam operations in the world.

"Illegal spam must be stopped," Abbott said at a press conference in Dallas. "Spam is one of the most aggravating and pervasive problems facing consumers today."

Abbott said the spam operation named in the civil suit has violated federal and Texas laws on spam as well as violating Texas trade practices. No criminal charges were filed.

The suit charges the operation with using misleading subject lines in e-mail messages and making numerous misrepresentations in the body of the e-mail.

For example, an e-mail may have a subject line telling a recipient of an urgent need concerning their home loan and the body of the note would solicit personal information, which the spammers are suspected of selling to marketing firms for $28 each.

Lawyers for those named in the suit were not immediately available for comment.

Abbott said Texas worked with Microsoft and others who set up "spam traps" - e-mail accounts established with the intent of collecting spam messages and tracking down the source. The traps set up by Microsoft received 24,000 e-mails from the operation that Abbott charges are electronic messages that violate federal and state spam laws.

Microsoft 'Titan' Will Zap 10 Top Worms

When the first version of Microsoft Corp.'s new malicious software removal tool is released on Tuesday, it will be pre-programmed to zap 10 of the most virulent worms and viruses, including Blaster, Sasser, MyDoom and Nachi.

As previously reported, the tool will be released as a "critical" download and updated once a month as part of Microsoft's scheduled software patch cycle.

According to a note released to Microsoft MVPs (Most Valuable Professionals), the initial version of the tool, code-named Titan, will be able to detect and delete the Blaster, Sasser, MyDoom, DoomJuice, Zindos, Berweb/Download.Ject, Gailbot and Nachi viruses.

In the event of a major worm or virus outbreak, Microsoft will push out updates for the malicious software removal tool outside of the monthly cycle, according to Amy Carroll, director of product management in Microsoft's security business technology unit.

The tool will also be pushed out to Windows users as a download through the Microsoft Download Center. Customers who have Automatic Updates turned on will automatically receive the download.

It will also be made available as an ActiveX control on a malware removal section of Microsoft's home page.

The tool is programmed to scan a PC for infections of known viruses, but it is not intended as a substitute for full anti-virus protection. After a

scan is conducted, the Microsoft tool will present color-coded results: a red 'X' for an infected machine or a green checkbox if nothing is detected.

Click here to read about Microsoft's plans for a subscription security service.

Anti-virus vendor McAfee Inc. also provides a similar tool called Avert Stinger. Stinger, available as a free download, uses scan engine technology, including process scanning, digitally signed DAT files and scan performance optimizations, to disinfect systems.

New Worm Wishes Users a Happy Nude Year

A new worm dubbed Wurmark-D has been reported by antivirus software maker Sophos.

Distributed through a large-scale e-mail campaign, the worm has a subject line of "amusing file" and includes an attachment of a photograph that features naked men and women whose bodies spell out the words "Happy New Year."

When opened, the worm installs itself on the user's PC, immobilizing security software and then forwarding itself to e-mail addresses stored in the infected computer.

The worm most likely was created to take advantage of employees returning from a long holiday season and facing a large volume of unopened e-mail, Sophos has noted.

So far, Sophos has received only a few reports of infection, and the firm does not expect widespread problems.

Wurmark is hardly the first incidence of worm creators and virus writers using porn as a way to woo users into opening an infected file.

Last year, a variant of the Sober worm was distributed in Germany with promises of photos of a blonde 21 year-old go-go dancer.

But the inclusion of nude photos has become enough of a tip-off for e-mail users that Wurmark should find limited distribution because of it, said Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant for Sophos.

"It's just so obvious," he told NewsFactor. "In many ways, we should thank the virus writer for creating something so blatantly infectious. Even people who barely use e-mail will know this one's suspicious."

In addition to the flagrantly obvious method of attracting e-mail users with nude photos, Wurmark also does its work without much subtlety.

"You can tell when it's infecting your computer," Cluley noted. "That makes it slightly unusual, because most worms now can infect without being detected."

Although the worm is not spreading far, there is a possibility that it will be passed on by people who enjoy sharing amusing photos and, especially, nude snapshots.

"I'm guessing this will be spread by young guys the most," joked Cluley.

Despite the worm's limited spread and straightforward infection characteristics, Sophos recommends that users be aware of it and take appropriate steps.

"Of course, people should exercise caution," said Cluley. This includes refraining from opening suspicious e-mail attachments, and running files through virus detection software.

EBay to Increase Fees, Angering Sellers

Some small business owners who reach most of their customers via eBay Inc. expressed anger Thursday at the online auction giant's plan to boost the monthly fee it charges sellers by 60 percent. Its shares lost nearly 4 percent.

EBay outlined the increase in a terse e-mail on Wednesday to all buyers and sellers, including small business owners who hawk clothing, electronics and other low-margin commodities.

"It seems as though the larger eBay becomes, the more greedy they become," said Lynette McDonald of Alton, Ill., who has sold Barbie and baby clothes on eBay since 2001. She says she may close her eBay store entirely because of the fee hikes or raise prices she changes buyers.

Starting Feb. 18, eBay said the monthly subscription fee for people who operate "Basic eBay Stores" will increase from $9.95 to $15.95.

The fee for a standard listing of 10 days will double, from 20 cents to 40 cents.

"This site used to be a place where one could get a good deal," McDonald said. "Now that the starting prices on goods are higher to accommodate the growing fees incurred, there are no more deals to be had."

Such reactions underscore the popularity eBay has achieved with small business owners who can't create their own Web sites or operate a traditional bricks-and-mortar establishments. Peddling vintage china, handmade sweaters, classic cars and other collectibles on eBay generates supplemental income for senior citizens, rural Americans and others who live far from commercial hubs.

EBay spokesman Hani Durzy declined to discuss how the price hikes would affect revenue at the San Jose, Calif.-based company, which reported sales of $805.88 million in the first three quarters of 2004. The company will report fourth-quarter earnings on Wednesday.

"We believe the price changes are the right thing to do to ensure the continued success of the marketplace," Durzy said. "Ultimately that's good for the entire community of buyers and sellers."

The changes, combined with eBay's dominance in the auction and online payment sectors, prompted some members to ask whether the government or a fair-business consortium should regulate fee structures so small-scale entrepreneurs don't get gouged.

"Yes, it is a free market and sellers can take their business elsewhere, but there is very little competition for this style format," said Artie Klawans, an art dealer in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

N.Y. County Tackles 'Cyberbullying'

Westchester County has hired an expert on "cyberbullying" to talk to students, teachers, parents and police about young people who harass their peers with mean-spirited Web sites, hounding text messages, invasive cell-phone photos and other high-tech tools.

Parry Aftab, executive director of wiredsafety.org, will conduct a "summit" on the issue Feb. 8 at the Westchester County Center, County Executive Andrew Spano announced Tuesday.

She will be assisted by Spider-Man under an arrangement between her organization and Marvel Enterprises Inc. "Kids will listen to him," she said, pointing at a man in a Spidey outfit during a news conference.

Aftab said that while schoolyard bullying has always been a problem among young teenagers, "We didn't have the power to communicate what we were doing to 700 million people with a click."

Aftab, whose organization is headquartered in Irvington, said examples of cyberbullying include "a Web site where children can vote for the ugliest, most unpopular or fattest girl in the school. It can involve sending private or very personal information or images to others or posting them online for the public to see. It can be annoying but otherwise harmless - or it can be dangerous, such as when it involves stalking and pornography."

Spano said a key issue in dealing with such problems is how to involve law enforcement without violating free speech rights, especially since much of the harassment is generated at home rather than at school.

"Kids, parents and schools need to know when to ignore it - just as schoolyard bullies are sometimes best ignored - and when to report it to law enforcement," he said.

Last year, a video of two Scarsdale high school girls engaging in a sexual encounter was widely distributed on the Internet and no charges resulted. In 2001, two Chappaqua high school boys escaped prosecution for allegedly operating an Internet site that listed girls' sexual secrets.

"No matter how offensive or how repulsive the communications were between these boys, they are protected by the First Amendment," District Attorney Jeanine Pirro said at the time.

Teen Web Editor Drives Apple to Court Action

Nicholas M. Ciarelli was not even old enough to shave when he started getting under Apple Computer Inc.'s skin.

As a 13-year-old middle-schooler, the New Woodstock, N.Y., native built a Web site in 1998 and began publishing insider news and rumors about Apple,

using the alias Nick dePlume.

Three years later, ThinkSecret.com was first to report that the company would debut a G4 version of the PowerBook laptop series. The product launched soon thereafter, along with ThinkSecret's reputation among Apple's legendarily zealous fans, generating millions of page views per month.

But after a series of letters warning the Web site to stop publishing proprietary information, Apple decided enough was enough. When Ciarelli scored yet another scoop in late December, by predicting the arrival of a new software package and a sub-$500 computer rolled out at this week's MacWorld Conference and Expo in San Francisco, the computer maker filed a lawsuit accusing him of illegally misappropriating trade secrets.

Ciarelli, now a 19-year-old Harvard University freshman, is part of a legion of Internet news gatherers whose influence is expanding as concern grows in some quarters about their accountability and journalistic standards. With the easy anonymity offered by online posting of tips and digital photographs, Web sites run by product buffs have caused headaches, and generated valuable buzz, for companies in many industries - including automobile and cell phone manufacturers - by leaking product information.

Ciarelli said he originally chose a pseudonym because he doubted many people would take a teenager seriously. He was publicly unmasked as ThinkSecret's editor in chief by the Harvard Crimson newspaper, which reported on the lawsuit this week.

"I talk to sources, follow up on leads and get details confirmed," said Ciarelli, a somewhat atypical technology savant who knows little about computer programming. "I believe that like other reporters I am protected by the First Amendment."

Apple, based in Cupertino, Calif., sees things differently: "Defendants' knowing misappropriation and disclosure of Apple's trade secrets constitutes a violation of California law and has caused irreparable harm to Apple," states its legal complaint, which was filed in California's Santa Clara County Superior Court.

A spokesman for the company, whose fortunes have been boosted this year by sales of its iPod digital music player, declined to comment on the case beyond a written statement. "Apple's DNA is innovation, and the protection of our trade secrets is crucial to our success," the company said in the statement.

Close followers of the company said Apple is unique among computer makers for the slew of fan Web sites that track its every move and compete for scoops. Though opinions of their quality varied - some reports are wildly off-base - many industry insiders monitor the sites regularly.

In part, that's because Apple chief executive Steve Jobs has a reputation for secrecy. The company's complaint against ThinkSecret.com is part of a larger legal assault on breaches of confidentiality. It's doubtful Apple knew it was targeting a teenager. The complaint names only dePlume and states that his "true name and identity" cannot be confirmed, though in earlier correspondence it referred to Ciarelli as the site's editor in chief.

The suit alleges that ThinkSecret.com induced tipsters to break non-disclosure agreements .

"This case raises legal issues and marketing issues for these companies because the providers of this information are their fans, people they don't want to antagonize, even though they may not want these things published right away," said Andrew Beckerman-Rodau, who runs the intellectual property program at Boston's Suffolk University Law School.

But while lawsuits against online publications are rare, he said, the Uniform Trade Secrets Act, versions of which have been adopted by about 45 states, including California, prevents third parties from exposing information knowingly obtained from sources bound by confidentiality agreements.

"Just because you don't have a relationship with the company doesn't necessarily immunize you, if you publish what you reasonably should have known was a trade secret," Beckerman-Rodau said. "The First Amendment has been asserted more and more against intellectual property rights, but it's not faring well. Most courts haven't accepted it."

Ciarelli said he became an Apple enthusiast when his parents, a school administrator and a music teacher, brought home a Macintosh Classic more than a decade ago. He owns a PowerMac G5 desktop computer and a PowerMac G4 laptop.

"Sites like mine are good for Apple because they generate interest in its products," he said in an interview on the Harvard campus. "At this point, I really don't think I am doing anything wrong."

He said that he has yet to retain a lawyer, and that he has 30 days to respond to Apple's complaint, which calls for damages and the forfeiture of "gains, profits, and advantages" and asks for a jury trial.

The company he established when the site was launched, the dePlume Organization LLC, is registered in New York. It lacks the money to defend a case against a major corporation, he said.

So far, the front page story in the Crimson has earned him little fame. "It's reading week," he said, referring to the study period before final exams. "People are too busy sleeping and studying for exams."

The response has been more forthcoming on dozens of Apple and technology-related Internet sites, where discussion of the case has raged for days.

"I fear this is just an attempt by a big business to spread fear and intimidate Web sites," said a correspondent on O'Grady's PowerPage.

ThinkSecret.com, which is a takeoff on Apple's former marketing slogan "Think Different," has a stripped-down, mostly text-based design; it features a number of advertisements placed by technology companies.

The ads "pay for the Web hosting and have helped with a little of my tuition," Ciarelli said.

A visitor who clicks on a box labeled "Got Dirt?" is taken to an e-mail form, below a note that reads in part, "Think Secret appreciates your news tips and insider information." There is also a phone number listed for tips.

Tim Bajarin, president of the Silicon Valley high-tech research and consulting firm Creative Strategies, said the real target of the suit is

whoever has been breaking non-disclosure agreements by leaking information.

"Apple is after the source," Bajarin said.

On that subject, Ciarelli is circumspect, though he denies speculation that a friend or family member works for Apple.

"I employ the same legal techniques as other journalists," he said.

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